

7 January 1959

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ

1. While we have no evidence that Qasim is a Communist, it is clear that he is increasingly coming under Communist influence and is likely soon to reach a point where he is incapable of action independent of the Communists.

2. Unless action is taken to curb Communism, or unless the Communists make a major tactical error, Iraq will probably be transformed into a Communist controlled State.

3. To avoid antagonizing its neighbors and the West, a Communist dominated Iraq would probably not adopt Communist forms to begin with.

4. We do not consider that Nasser's conspiratorial apparatus in Iraq is -- at least for the time being -- sufficiently organized to enable him to initiate a successful coup from Cairo aimed at bringing Iraq into the UAR. Nevertheless, as the main heroic figure of Arab Nationalism, he has considerable influence in Iraq -- particularly through his propaganda media and his agents.

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5. The only effective and organized force in Iraq capable of countering Communism is the Army. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] believe that there are substantial elements in the Officer corps who would welcome closer ties with the UAR and we believe that as opinion in Iraq becomes increasingly polarized these elements will increase. Nevertheless skillful and determined efforts are certain to be made by the Communists to subvert the Army. [REDACTED]

6. There are elements in Iraq such as the middle class technicians, professional administrators and commercial circles who would still welcome a stable middle of the road government dominated neither by the Communists nor by Nasser. They would support any action that the Army might take to achieve this, but they do not in their own right represent an independent force for such stabilization.

7. There is a distinct possibility that a period of chaos might develop in the event of an unsuccessful coup or a breakdown of administration. Should this happen the ultimate advantage will lie with the Communists, who demonstrated immediately after the Revolution a striking organizational and improvisational skill.

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